

THE ZOOLOGIST

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NOTES ON THE ORNITHOLOGY OF OXFORDSHIRE, 1902.

By O. V. APLIN, F.L.S.

JANUARY, 1902.

3rd.—Song-Thrush singing; the first I have heard this winter. Some very fine Bramblings, with a very large flock of Sparrows, and some Tree-Sparrows and Chaffinches; also a big flock of Larks, which looked very small, all feeding in a stubble-field recently spread with manure. Winter aconite flowering.

5th.—*Galanthus Elwesii* and *Cyclamen Coum* in flower.

6th.—Mistle-Thrush singing. Big flock of Fieldfares. Goldfinches are tolerably common this winter.

9th.—Examined, at Mr. Bartlett's, a Corn-Crake, shot close to Banbury about Dec. 23rd last. Also a Grey Crow, the sixth local example he has had to stuff this winter.

15th.—Sharp frost, 19°.

22nd.—Mistle-Thrushes noisy, and seem to be pairing.

25th.—Lesser Redpolls in my orchard, feeding on seeding plants of milfoil; they have been in the habit of coming for nearly a month.

FEBRUARY.

2nd.—Strong wind from N.N.E. the last four days, and frost. A gale to-day.

3rd.—Mistle-Thrushes noisy (fighting or pairing) when they came for holly-berries.

5th.—Nuthatch with succession of long whistles. Snow on the ground.

8th.—Some more snow. In my orchard a male Stonechat (still in dull winter dress, but showing the collar and dark head) was haunting some holes which had been dug for planting apple-trees. Close to it a Lark was running about. It is most unusual to see either of these birds in such a situation, as it is quite in the village, and surrounded by houses.

10th.—Mistle-Thrushes feeding on holly-berries in front of the house. A few days ago they were noisy when they came to feed, chasing one another, either in anger or love, so that they could hardly get anything to eat; now they are tame with hunger, and only think of swallowing as many berries as possible.

15th.—Hard frost continues. On one of the hilly fields at Milcomb I saw a party of half a dozen Meadow-Pipits; this is unusually early for them to be seen in a flock, and on the uplands. The few that stay the winter with us are usually seen singly, in wet meadows or about sheep-pens on turnips. Several Fieldfares in the garden.

16th.—Very severe frost. Redwings in a bird-cherry within a few feet of one of the windows.

21st.—Milder. Song-Thrush sang again.

24th.—Chaffinch sang.

MARCH.

1st.—The first genial day this season.

2nd.—Snowdrops only now making a good show. Crocus coming out.

3rd.—A Blackbird's nest appeared to be finished to-day; in ivy on oak-tree.

6th.—News of some Wild Geese, which flew over a farmer's head only a few yards from the ground, at Windmill Hill, early on Sunday morning (2nd).

10th.—Some apricot-blossoms expanded.

16th.—Hot spring day. Two pairs of Peewits on a ploughing. Several Sulphur Butterflies, both male and female.

18th.—Several Yellow Buntings singing.

22nd.—Mr. Fowler observed the Chiffchaff at Kingham.



23rd.—Long-tailed Tits building.

27th.—Wheatear on big open grass-field near Crouch Hill—a favourite spot for them.

28th.—As nice a Good Friday as I ever remember ; a most lovely warm spring day ; the peach-blossom on the wall is “a sight to behold.”

30th.—The Blackbird's nest which looked finished on the 3rd stood empty for some days, and to-day has four fresh eggs. A Song-Thrush has built a nest on the top of an old Flycatcher's nest placed on the top of a wall plum-tree. The nest is small, but on one side is a mass of old dry midribs of horseradish leaves, which hang down and make the nest very conspicuous. There is a horseradish-bed near the tree. The nest contains four eggs, small and oddly marked, few markings, and most of them at the small ends of the eggs.

31st.—Kestrels pairing.

APRIL.

1st.—When Otter-hunting on the Ouse, near Buckingham, just where that river touches Oxfordshire, I saw a last year's Reed-Warbler's nest in the reeds. Heard the Chiffchaff, and put up a pair of and two single Wild Ducks.

5th.—Blackcap in garden.

11th.—Saw a Comma Butterfly in the garden, which eluded me, and flew over the wall ; but by great good luck I caught it up, and captured it in my neighbour's stackyard. This is the only one I have seen here.

12th.—Not a migrant to be seen or heard, except another Blackcap near Banbury. A single Swallow reported as seen on the 8th. Bitterly cold lately ; wind N.E., with morning frosts.

13th.—Sharp white frost, and ice as thick as a penny at 7.30 a.m., but nice sunny day. A rush of migrants—Willow-Wrens, Chiffchaffs (the first observed here), and Redstarts. Barred Woodpecker jarring. Put a Crow off its nest.

14th.—Swallow.

15th.—Many Swallows over Evenlode at Charlbury, and two House-Martins higher up the river.

18th.—Tree-Pipit, Lesser Whitethroat (common), Grass-hopper-Warbler.

19th.—Cuckoo heard several times.

21st.—Examined, at Mr. Bartlett's, a white Starling, shot at Barford on Nov. 8th; a Black-headed Gull in full dress, shot at Hook Norton on March 2nd; and a Wryneck (a scarce bird here), shot at Banbury on March 26th; also a curious small Brown Owl, shot near Shotteswell in the middle of January.

23rd.—A Long-eared and a Natterer's Bat, found by men mending a roof, sent to me.

24th.—Mr. Whitaker and I noticed several Nightingales, Whinchats, and Whitethroats. Also the Wood-Wren near Epwell, and that the Sand-Martins had arrived at their breeding quarters in Tadmarton sand-pit.

25th.—Nightingales last year and this were and are more common about here than they have been for a long time; several near the village. Ray's Wagtail, Sedge-Warbler. Magpie's nest with six eggs.

27th.—Mr. A. H. Macpherson and I saw a fine Wheatear of the large race on one of the hilly fields covered with old ant-hills at Milcomb; the salmon-buff of the neck and breast was very rich. Flushed a Snipe near Broughton.

28th.—Noticed half a dozen pairs of Peewits about these hills.

MAY.

3rd.—A nice lot of Goldfinches singing about the village this spring. Cuckoos are scarce.

4th.—The Hedge-Sparrow at this time of year warbles in an undertone—a much richer song than his usual one.

5th.—Marsh-Tit's nest, with eight eggs, in a hole in a very large old apple-tree; nest of moss, wool, cat's fur, and thistle-down. Barred Woodpecker's nesting-hole, found on April 26th, opened to-day. The male was inside, but nothing else. It was in the rotten wood of an old pollard-willow, about $1\frac{1}{2}$ in. in diameter, went in about 7 in. and down about 9 in., and was a good 3 in. across at the bottom.

6th.—Left home for a month.

JUNE.

9th.—Left home until 13th.

18th.—Red-backed Shrike in the old haunt in the Milton lane.

23rd.—The first really warm day this summer.

25th.—Partridge's nest of thirteen eggs, just ready to hatch, mown out.

26th.—Another of twelve in the same clover-field about half incubated.

27th.—To Kingham to see Marsh-Warbler's nest in osier-bed. The "handles" not so high as usual. Nest substantially made, supported by two osier and two nettle stems, the handles being attached to the osiers. The nest was lower down than usual (about two feet from the ground). A little hair in the lining. It contained four eggs (laid by the 24th or earlier), which had the ground colour almost white, marked with a zone of dark clear markings.

28th.—The last week has been hot, with a wind (chiefly E.) almost as dry as sirocco. For some days the Lesser Whitethroat has sung regularly close to the windows in a bird-cherry tree. For the third year in succession a Red-legged Partridge has hatched her eggs on a straw-rick at a field-barn in Broughton quarter.

JULY.

2nd.—Cuckoo in full song. A Song-Thrush has sung for some time (chiefly in the evening) from the ridge of the stable-roof.

4th.—Starlings feeding young in a hole in the walnut-tree. Starlings nested in the same hole in April.

9th.—Mr. R. W. Calvert and I heard the Cuckoo in full song at Langley early in the morning, and again in the evening. This is the latest date on which I ever remember hearing it. Probably the cold spring (it was said to be the coldest May for sixty years) retarded the Cuckoo's breeding. On the 17th Mr. Fowler wrote word that he had a young Cuckoo in a Whitethroat's nest at Kingham. In the cold wet summer of 1879 I heard the Cuckoo on July 4th, and in 1888 (another cold season) on the 5th.

11th.—A most destructive frost! It damaged potatoes, vegetable-marrows, and kidney-beans in many gardens, and in the allotments. But in my home-garden, which lies high, I got no frost. The thermometer on the wall only down to 42°, *i. e.* about 38° on the ground. A frost like this would probably kill some young birds on the low ground.

15th.—Examined a nice adult female Hobby, shot on or about June 23rd near Hanwell. Another bird was seen. There is no doubt that the Hobby would breed every year in small numbers in Oxfordshire if it were not molested. Unfortunately this useful bird is regarded as a "hawk" simply.

28th.—Grasshopper-Warbler singing at Milcomb Gorse; this bird sings late in the season.

AUGUST.

1st.—Barred Woodpecker near Charlbury.

3rd.—The drought is severe now, and damaging what little fruit there is. Many Warblers (Blackcaps, Garden-Warblers, Lesser and Common Whitethroats) in kitchen-garden.

4th.—A pair of Swallows are building in one of my pigsties, occupied by two pigs! The walls of the sty-yard (6 ft. by 7 ft.) are $5\frac{1}{2}$ ft. high. The birds have to drop down into this yard, and then shoot in at a doorway $4\frac{1}{2}$ ft. high and $2\frac{1}{2}$ ft. broad. The nest is on a crossbeam, 6 ft. from the ground. I think the birds chose this curious situation for the sake of coolness (only the early morning sun falls on the roof), for there is plenty of room for Swallows to breed in a wood-shed and a barn (in both of which some birds breed every year) close to the pigstye. I notice, too, that the Swallows which breed in the wood-shed always build under the north slope of the roof. The scarcity of Swallows is now evident; no doubt many perished in the cold weather in May.

6th.—The first good rain since the middle of June.

12th.—Saw a Green Sandpiper in the Cherwell valley.

15th.—Many Swifts in the forenoon. Chiffchaff singing in a very low tone in the garden for the last two or three days. Blackcap singing in the holly-tree by my window; only the low preliminary notes.

16th.—Close and hot at times. Between twelve and one o'clock numbers of Starlings hawking for flies over the village; the sky was dotted over with them. Roughly speaking, they were all from 200 to 600 ft. high, calculating from the church-spire, which is 198 ft. high. Many Warblers in the garden. The Swifts, I think, have gone.

19th.—Nuthatch "trilling."

20th.—Examined a Cormorant (a bird of last year, I think), which, on the 15th, startled some passing gentlemen near Banbury by falling out of a tall elm-tree on to the ground in front of them. It was probably exhausted after a long flight. About the same time I saw a report of another Cormorant seen on the Thames at Henley.

25th.—Mistle-Thrushes in flocks. One Swift at Milcomb.

SEPTEMBER.

1st.—Very little corn cut—too little to permit of much shooting.

2nd.—Flock of Peewits in turnip-field.

3rd.—Some Meadow-Pipits in swede-turnips.

10th.—Very wet harvest weather.

13th.—Shot over part of our beat for first time; several fields of barley uncut; a fair lot of good young birds. We saw no Land-Rails, although we walked through a great deal of standing corn. I saw one come out of a field of oats which was being cut on the 6th.

15th.—Swallows have young in the pigstye.

16th.—A big flock of Peewits in turnip-field; one old bird weighed 8 oz., and a fat young one $8\frac{1}{4}$ oz.

19th.—Young male Sparrow-Hawk shot at South Newington.

20th.—For several days (hazy mornings) a great congregation of Swallows and Martins on this house-roof.

25th.—Beautiful autumn weather; hazy mornings and bright still days. Fewer Swallows and Martins.

OCTOBER.

1st.—Meadow-Pipits in little flocks.

6th.—A small flock of Martins about the village.

8th.—A good many Jays about. News of a Land-Rail flushed from standing barley on the 2nd.

15th.—Grey Wagtail at a farmyard pond at Milcomb; it appeared by the village brook the last week in September.

18th.—Mr. Calvert told me he saw a Golden Plover on one of his fields at Langley a day or two ago. He often sees odd ones, and sometimes a small flock visits him.

23rd. — Saw one or two Bramblings about the beech-trees near Great Tew. Examined, at Mr. Coombes's, a young female Peregrine Falcon, killed in August at Rodford, near Enstone.

25th.—Song-Thrush singing well, and again next day.

27th.—Fieldfares in some numbers.

28th.—Redwings.

29th.—Many of both species. Jays seen all about; there has clearly been an immigration. Larks in good flocks.

NOVEMBER.

4th.—Jays very much in evidence about the Grove.

11th.—Song-Thrushes continue to sing.

12th.—Very warm and pleasant. Linnets and Yellow Bunting singing!

14th.—Very nice weather. Song-Thrushes in fine song.

17th.—Gathered a bunch of roses of various kinds in good condition.

18th.—Hard white frost.

26th.—Received a partly skinned Peregrine Falcon, shot about three miles north of Oxford on the 21st. It is a young female. Weight, 2 lb. 10 oz.; total length of skin, 20·2 in.; wing, from carpal joint, 14·7 in.; cere bluish grey; legs pale dull yellow; bill blue-grey, tip dark horn. Vast flocks of Wood-Pigeons have arrived here, but I reserve an account of this great invasion until the end of these notes. We may now, however, expect to hear of Peregrines, which live chiefly on Wood-Pigeons when they visit us.

DECEMBER.

2nd.—On the Grove estate I noticed both Barred and Green Woodpeckers; the latter makes a hollow rattle with the first few beats of its wings as it flies from one tree to another.

4th.—Sharp frost, sunny; snowed a little. Mistle-Thrush sang, but only a few notes.

5th.—Half a dozen Meadow-Pipits about a sheep-pen. Hard frost.

9th.—Not many Fieldfares now, but a good many Redwings, and a fair number of Song-Thrushes.

10th.—Corn-Bunting strung together a few notes.

11th.—Mr. Bartlett showed me an immature Golden-eye and a Green Sandpiper in the flesh, shot in the Cherwell valley near King's Sutton. The Tree-Creeper, flying down from the top of one tree to the base of another near at hand, has quite a spiral flight.

13th.—Mr. W. Horwood, of Caversfield, reports that great numbers of Jays have visited the "Spanish" oaks in Middleton Stoney Park, and over a hundred have been shot. Also that Larks are now to be seen in large flocks. On the 5th inst., between Stratton Audley and Caversfield, he saw a large flock fly across the road, and no fewer than six of them struck the single telegraph-wire, and were picked up. The sun was bright at the time. Mr. Horwood thinks they were migrants, and that residents would not have struck in this way. He also reports that he saw a beautifully pied Blackbird in Caversfield parish on the same day. Weather turned mild again.

21st.—White aconite flowering.

22nd.—Song-Thrushes singing grandly after a short interval, especially early in the dark mornings. Starlings chatter and whistle almost like spring.

25th.—A beautiful sunny spring-like day; I never before knew so beautiful a Christmas Day. The weather for some days about this time was like that of a very nice March.

29th.—Saw a male Sparrow-Hawk; and, of bright-coloured birds, Goldfinch, Bullfinch, Green Woodpecker, and Kingfisher.

31st.—Attracted by the outcries of Rooks in the paddock-walk, I saw a Peregrine Falcon (a female from the size) flying away. In some alders over a score of Goldfinches were feeding like Redpolls; also three of the latter. Primroses and violets flowering in the garden.

I have received news from Mr. W. W. Fowler that he had had reported to him two Swallows seen in Port Meadow on the 21st, a wonderfully warm day (*in lit.*).

The Rev. F. C. R. Jourdain writes me word that on a cold day (some snow on the ground) about the end of November, 1884, he saw, on a scrubby bit of hedge bordering the Holywell football-field, Oxford, two little birds dodging about. He watched them for some time at close quarters, and was particularly struck

with the peculiar colour of their irides. Their general shape and habits reminded him of the Whitethroat's. With the aid of Gould's 'Birds of Great Britain,' any doubts he felt about their being Dartford Warblers were set completely at rest (*in lit.*, Oct. 18th, 1902).

Autumn Nesting.—Many birds nested, or tried to nest, this autumn. A Robin's nest with four eggs was found near Banbury in November ('Banbury Guardian'). A Wren built a nest in an Irish yew here in November. Rooks in two rookeries here built nests. Mr. Digby Pigot reported that during the week ending Nov. 22nd a Thrush hatched out young ones, and a Starling and Wren had eggs at Sarsden (Bull. B. O. Club, xiii. p. 26). Starlings were about my buildings just as they are in spring, but were not seen to build. I used to see Sparrows carrying up feathers and hay in front of the house. Mr. Fowler wrote from Oxford, on Dec. 3rd, that he had seen a fresh Sparrow's egg broken on the ground the day before, "and even this cold morning I saw a Sparrow with a feather in its bill. At Churchill the boys have lately found a Blackbird's nest with eggs (one, I think); also a Starling's, Robin's, and Wren's, all with eggs."

The autumn was not remarkably mild and genial, and I can hardly account for so many birds attempting to breed at this unusual season. Possibly the cold wet weather which prevailed during the breeding season prevented many of them from rearing their young then, and they tried to mend matters later on. If so, the short spell of severe weather early in December put an end to the attempt.

The most important ornithological feature of the autumn of 1902 was the vast invasion of Wood-Pigeons which took place in North Oxon in November and December. I may premise that we are in this district not accustomed to seeing the great flocks of Pigeons about which one hears in other parts of the country. A flock of about two hundred we see sometimes, and that but rarely.

On Nov. 25th a neighbour told me that he had about two thousand on his clover-fields. On Dec. 2nd I put up, from a

barley-stubble with clover on the Grove, a flock which I estimated to contain from one thousand to fifteen hundred, which went off, about 3.30 p.m., in a long "stringing" flock towards the Aynhoe Woods; another flock, quite as large, passed a little later, heading towards the wooded high ground at North Aston. The next day I heard of vast flocks on the Barford side of the parish, and at Heythrop, and the Northamptonshire borders; and during the next ten days I heard of their remarkable abundance all over the district.

By the 10th they seemed, if anything, to have increased, although during their stay they had been subjected to an almost constant fusillade, and hundreds were killed. To-day I saw, in a large barley-stubble, five or six thousand at least. When they rose they filled the sky; some Rooks rose at the same time, and it is not often one has a chance of seeing so many birds of any kind at one time. Certainly I never before saw so many land-birds at once. On an adjoining farm twelve were killed (and picked up) at one shot to-day. They disappeared rather suddenly by the 15th.

During the cold week (4th to 11th) the Banbury poulterers' shops were full of Pigeons. One man on the 11th had one hundred and eighty lying in a heap.

The best bag I heard of being made by one man was near Shenington, *viz.* one hundred and six birds in two days. They sold for fivepence each (and were retailed at one time at eightpence), but during the slump they came down to twopence each, and they were retailed as low as sixpence. At this price they were very cheap, for I had never before eaten Pigeons in such good condition.

All the birds I examined had been feeding on barley, with a very few clover-leaves in some cases. This good living made them very fat, with a layer of fat under their skins. They were not very large birds; a bunch of six weighed $7\frac{1}{4}$ lb. The heaviest I weighed was 22 oz.

Where they came from is not known. Why they came is a matter of conjecture. It was said that there were no acorns and no beech-mast in some parts of the country where great flocks of Pigeons usually feed. Hence the necessity for emigration. But why they stayed with us was very clear. The harvest

of this year was a long and lingering one, with much wet and stormy weather, although the corn ripened in good time. The natural consequence was that there was in the fields an unusually large quantity of "shed-corn" lying about. Indeed, I never previously saw anything like such a quantity. In some fields it (especially barley) was strewn quite thickly. On this the Pigeons fed, and they really did some good by clearing it up. They came in mild weather; the advent of hard weather made no difference to them; and they left rather suddenly, just as the weather turned mild again. It was evident that they had eaten the corn up, and we were glad they went without resorting to the clover-leaves and turnip-tops.

NOTES ON BIRDS OF THE NARIN DISTRICT, CO. DONEGAL.

By W. C. WRIGHT, M.B.O.U.

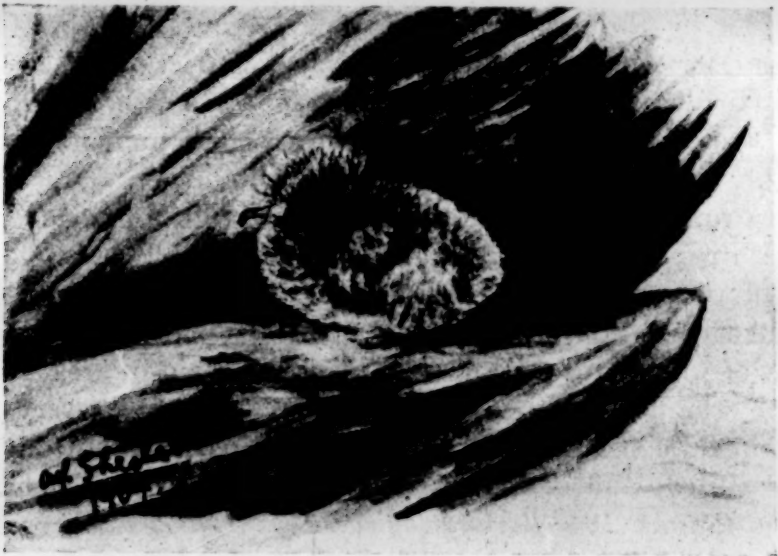
THE tract of land to the north of Ardara, bounded on the south by Loughros More Bay, on the north by the Gweebarra Bay, terminating in the west in Dawros Head, and bounded on the east by the road running from Ardara to Narin, I have termed, for convenience' sake, the Narin district of Co. Donegal. It is fairly well cultivated, and, as is the case with the whole of Co. Donegal, well-watered, there being a large number of small loughs, the largest being Kiltooris, containing a large island with a ruined castle; Lough Doon, with its ruined bawn or fort in the centre; Loughs Birroge and Pound.

Off the coast lie several small islands, the largest being Inishkeel; it was formerly the site of a small monastery, the ruins of which still remain. This island is held in great veneration by the peasantry, and is visited in pilgrimage every year. Roaninish, a small flat island four miles out in the Atlantic, is uninhabited, and is the breeding resort of a large colony of Storm-Petrels (*Procellaria pelagica*).

On July 27th last I visited this island, and found the Petrels were in the midst of incubation; in a few cases young in down were found in the nest, but I should say laying generally had just commenced, the eggs looking fresh, and a few I took, on blowing, proved so. The difference in size of these eggs is remarkable, some measuring as much as $1.23 \times .87$, others only $1.02 \times .76$.

The young were very pretty little things, the down being a slaty colour. (Cf. illustration on p. 374.) Both male and female incubate, and in every case, when lifted from the egg, the oil was ejected from the bird's mouth; one I held in my hand repeated the operation four times, and when let off it rested on a stone, as if dazed, and then fluttered along the boulders, and out to sea.

The nest in some cases had a scanty lining of grass or seaweed, but in places where sand or small pebbles appeared beneath the boulders, no materials of any kind were used, the egg lying in a small hollow on bare sand. The nests were found only on the north and east sides of the island, amongst large banks of boulders. It was only while in the vicinity of their nests that the presence of the birds was betrayed by the smell peculiar to the Petrel; this odour was very marked as one lay on the top of the stony bank, or removed the stones in search for the nest, when the birds also uttered a peculiar cheeping note.



Young of *Procellaria pelagica* (half nat. size).

Both Common and Arctic Terns were also nesting on this island. Large numbers of eggs much advanced in incubation were lying in little hollows on the grass; young birds were also seen, both in down and some nearly fully fledged.

Ring-Plovers (*Ægialitis hiaticola*) and Oystercatchers (*Hæmatopus ostralegus*) were common. I was surprised to see a Dunlin (*Tringa alpina*), in fine plumage, on this lonely rock. The boatman told me that a pair of Royal Gulls (*Larus marinus*) bred on the island both this and every other year in his memory; the pair sailed majestically over our boat when leaving.

On the sea, between the mainland and the island, were large

numbers of Common Guillemots (*Uria troile*), Razorbills (*Alca torda*), and Puffins (*Fratercula arctica*); whilst a few Black Guillemots (*Uria grylle*) flew past the "Ellas" rocks, on which I noticed a large number of Shags (*Phalacrocorax graculus*) and Herring-Gulls (*Larus argentatus*) sitting. The only other birds noticed on the island was a solitary Wheatear (*Saxicola ananthe*), and a few Rock-Pipits (*Anthus obscurus*).

The fresh-water loughs near Narin are the breeding-places of large numbers of Common Gulls (*Larus canus*), notably at Lough Birroge, where there is a small colony on a rocky island, and at Lough Doon, where there were a large number. At the beginning of August the parent birds were still haunting this lough, and I saw several young birds on the many small islands still unable to fly.

At Kiltoris Lough there was a very large colony of Common Terns (*Sterna fluviatilis*) nesting on two small low islands. On July 25th, when I first visited the lough, eggs and young were found in all stages, the former from fresh eggs to those just chipped and the young bird emerging, and the latter from young just hatched to those almost able to fly. I placed a downy young one in the water, and found it was quite at home, striking out boldly and swimming. The parent birds kept flying backwards and forwards from the sea a short distance away, bringing fry in their bills; these were lying all over the place in small heaps, having been disgorged before being given to their young for food.

The stench on these islands was very disagreeable, caused by the large quantities of fry and rotting eggs lying about, part of the islands having been submerged by water, and flooding a large number of the nests.

Coots (*Fulica atra*) and Little Grebes (*Podiceps fluviatilis*) were also plentiful on this lough; they frequented the south end, the only part where reeds were growing. I saw several very large nests of the former. A Mallard (*Anas boscas*) frequented this lough; it was seen daily rising from the reeds, and flying over our heads as we were Trout-fishing. All the loughs in this district contain Brown Trout of enormous size, according to the natives, but the angler may consider himself lucky if he gets his basket filled with fish averaging one pound. All the

loughs have stony bottoms and very few weeds, and consequently the feeding for fish is poor; however, the Trout rise well to the fly, and give good sport.

At Lough Derryduff there is a small heronry, and these fine birds can be seen at the edge of most of the loughs, standing patiently on the watch for fish, frog, or anything that might pass their way.

The Common Bunting (*Emberiza miliaria*) deserves its title here; it is, indeed, a plentiful species, and is to be seen sitting on telegraph-wires in the most barren tracts of country; a pair nested in a field in front of the Port Noo Hotel. The young birds were seen early in August being fed by their parents every morning; they sat on a stone wall, and kept up a mournful call until their appetites were appeased. Yellow Buntings (*E. citrinella*) and Reed-Buntings (*E. schoeniclus*) were fairly common, the former numerous about Ardara, and of the latter there were always a few pairs at all the loughs.

The only wooded part of the district is at Ardara, and in the Woodhill demesne there I found the Spotted Flycatcher (*Muscicapa grisola*) a numerous species; they were frequenting a portion of the demesne where timber had been felled, and almost from every stump the eye caught the upward dart of these pretty little birds as they flew after insects, and returned again to the same post. The day of my visit (Aug. 1st) I counted over a dozen of these birds. Willow-Warblers and Goldcrests were also numerous.

On Aug. 5th, when returning from Dawros Head, I saw a small flock of Wagtails feeding on the sands close to Rosbeg. On examining them through glasses, I put them down for *Motacilla alba*, the back being light grey, and with large black throat patch. This would be probably in the line of the return migration. On the other hand, I saw a small flock of similar birds about the same time last year on the sands at Trawbreaga Bay, near Malin Head, Co. Donegal. The Pied Wagtail (*M. lugubris*) and Grey Wagtail (*M. melanope*) were scarce. I saw a few of the former near Port Noo, and a pair of the latter at Ardara.

The Linnet (*Linota cannabina*) and Lesser Redpoll (*L. rufescens*) were very plentiful, the former in large flocks near Narin. The male birds were in splendid plumage.

Amongst other birds seen during my fortnight's stay at Narin were the Nightjar (*Caprimulgus europæus*)—one flew against the thatch of a cottage in broad sunlight; a pair of Ravens (*Corvus corax*) flew over Lough Birroge, croaking loudly, and looked as if they were heading for Arranmore, where a pair breed; a Peregrine Falcon (*Falco peregrinus*) flew down amongst the Terns on Kiltorris Lough, but was soon mobbed away; one Long-eared Owl (*Asio otus*) seen flitting across the stream flowing from Lough Pound; Curlew (*Numenius arquata*) were common, seen in flocks of forty to fifty in the evening flying over to Inishkeel Island; Gannets (*Sula bassana*) were often seen fishing in Gweebarra Bay; on July 31st there were very large numbers of both mature and young birds; these were probably home-bred, from our only Irish breeding-station.

BIRD-LIFE IN JERSEY.

By Sergeant H. MACKAY, 2nd H.L.I.

(Concluded from p. 344.)

QUAIL (*Coturnix communis*).—Generally distributed throughout the island during summer, and nests in suitable situations. A specimen was taken as late as Dec. 12th, 1903.

LAND-RAIL (*Crex pratensis*).—Fairly common during summer months.

SPOTTED CRAKE (*Porzana maruetta*).—This species was in former years quite a common summer visitor, but is now exceptionally rare. Mr. Romeril informs me that he has not seen or heard of a single specimen being taken during the past ten years.

WATER-RAIL (*Rallus aquaticus*).—Sparsely distributed in suitable localities throughout the island.

MOORHEN (*Gallinula chloropus*).—Scarce.

GREAT BUSTARD (*Otis tarda*).—Two specimens of this exceptionally rare visitor were shot on King's Meadow in December, 1899. Mr. Romeril showed me an enlarged photograph of one of the specimens which he assisted in setting up. There are no other records of this species having been taken on the island.

LITTLE BUSTARD (*O. tetrax*).—Mr. Caplin has in his collection a fine female specimen of the Little Bustard, which was obtained here on February 4th, 1902.

STONE CURLEW (*Edicnemus scolopax*).—This species is seldom met with, only a few specimens having been recorded. Mr. Caplin possesses a male specimen.

WOODCOCK (*Scolopax rusticula*).—A few birds visit the island about the month of October, but the species is by no means common. I had a specimen sent me for preservation on Jan. 12th this year.

COMMON SNIPE (*Gallinago caelestis*).—Fairly common throughout the island in suitable situations.

COMMON SANDPIPER (*Totanus hypoleucus*).—Common.

GREEN SANDPIPER (*T. ochropus*).—There are a number of

Green Sandpipers on record, but it is considered scarce, as it is only obtained at long intervals.

AMERICAN PECTORAL SANDPIPER (*Tringa maculata*).—Mr. Romeril informs me that about twenty-five or thirty years ago he saw four specimens of this Sandpiper in a field close to his own house. He secured one bird, which is now in his collection, but has not seen or heard of any having been taken in the island since.

WILLOW-WREN (*Phylloscopus trochilus*). — Fairly common during the summer.

WRYNECK (*Iynx torquilla*). — Common during the summer months, especially around Fort Regent, where its loud shrill call attracts the attention of even the most casual observer.

The sea-birds frequenting the shores of Jersey are of considerable variety, although not numerous, the Brent Goose and Common Gull excepted, and are sparsely distributed here and there along the shore. The whole coast of the island is for the most part of a wild and rugged description, a suitable feeding-ground, one would imagine, for almost every variety of sea-bird. The scarcity of specimens is no doubt due to the coast-line being rather thickly populated; besides, the presence of fishermen, bait-diggers, and wrack-gatherers in considerable numbers amongst the rocks at low tide renders the shore practically uninhabitable by sea-fowl.

GREY LAG-GOOSE (*Anser cinereus*). — So far as I can learn, only one specimen of this Goose has been taken here, viz. in December, 1899.

WHITE-FRONTED GOOSE (*A. albifrons*).—This species is a very rare visitor to the Jersey shores, and then only in extremely severe winters. The last recorded specimen was taken on Dec. 8th, 1901.

BRENT GOOSE (*Bernicla brenta*).—Large flocks of these Geese frequent the shores every winter, and I am informed that Mr. Spencer Robin shot no fewer than eighty-four birds during the winter of 1902-03.

SHELD-DUCK (*Tadorna cornuta*). — This species is decidedly rare, and is only obtained during exceptionally severe winters.

MALLARD (*Anas boschas*).—Scarce, a few being recorded each winter.

PINTAIL (*Dafila acuta*).—This species occurs but rarely during the winter months. Mr. Romeril has two finely mounted male specimens in his collection.

TEAL (*Nettion crecca*).—A few specimens usually obtained in winter.

WIGEON (*Mareca penelope*).—Annual winter visitor in small numbers.

POCHARD (*Fuligula ferina*).—A few specimens find their way to the island during the winter, but only at very rare intervals.

TUFTED DUCK (*F. cristata*).—So far as I can learn, this species has not been obtained in Jersey, although Mr. Caplin received a specimen from Guernsey in December, 1899.

KING-EIDER DUCK (*Somateria spectabilis*).—This is one of the rarest specimens I have ever handled. A paragraph in the Jersey 'Times,' stating that an Eider-Duck had been shot at La Roque, and was in the hands of the local taxidermist for preservation, caused me to interview that gentleman for the purpose of examining the bird in question. In place of the Common Eider, I was surprised to find a female specimen of the King-Eider, a species much more rare than the former. I examined this bird most carefully, in order to ensure correct identification. This species may be recognized by the feathers on the upper mandible reaching down to the nostril; besides, its colour consists of two shades of brown only, whereas the colour of the Common Eider is chiefly buff, the tail being dull black. This example tallies in every respect with the description given in the 'Manual of British Birds,' with the exception of size. The 'Manual' states that the length of wing of the King-Eider is 10 in., whereas the wing of the specimen referred to measures 10½ in., almost the same length as the wing-measurement of the Common Eider. However this may be, the distinctive markings are too much in evidence to admit of any doubt as to its identity, and its larger size may be easily accounted for by the fact that variations in size must naturally occur amongst members of the feathered world, just as they do in every other department of the animal kingdom. The specimen is still in Mr. Caplin's possession, who, I am sure, will be pleased to furnish any information regarding it.

COMMON SCOTER (*Edemia nigra*).—This species is obtained

but rarely around these shores, although several specimens have passed through Mr. Caplin's hands from time to time.

RED-BREASTED MERGANSER (*Mergus serrator*).—This species is met with occasionally, but principally during hard winters, as many as four being taken in one season. Mr. Caplin has one in his possession which was shot on Dec. 21st, 1903.

RINGED PLOVER (*Egialitis hiaticola*).—Fairly common around the coast.

GOLDEN PLOVER (*Charadrius pluvialis*).—A few specimens are usually obtained every winter; they are, however, considered scarce.

GREY PLOVER (*Squatarola helvetica*).—Like the foregoing, the Grey Plover visits the island but sparingly.

LAPWING (*Vanellus vulgaris*).—Fairly common, principally between the months of January and April. Observed a large flock off St. Clement's Bay on March 13th, 1904.

TURNSTONE (*Streptilas interpres*).—Fairly common around the coast during the winter months.

OYSTERCATCHER (*Hæmatopus ostralegus*).—A few specimens are obtained every winter, but it is by no means common.

REDSHANK (*Totanus calidris*).—A few specimens usually obtained during the spring and summer months.

BAR-TAILED GODWIT (*Limosa lapponica*).—Only very few specimens are on record as having been taken on the island, and is considered rare.

BLACK-TAILED GODWIT (*L. belgica*).—A specimen of the Black-tailed Godwit was shot off Alderney on May 16th this year. So far as I can learn, this is the first record of its appearance in any of the Channel Islands.

CURLEW (*Numenius arquata*).—These birds are but sparsely distributed around the coast, and are more in evidence from January to March. Observed five birds flying very high, and in a south-westerly direction, on July 21st last.

WHIMBREL (*N. phæopus*).—Has been obtained occasionally during the spring months, but is considered rare. A specimen was shot on the island on May 19th this year.

COMMON TERN (*Sterna fluvialis*).—Fairly common around the coast.

COMMON GULL (*Larus canus*).—Abundant all around the coast.

HERRING-GULL (*L. argentatus*).—Common.

KITTIWAKE-GULL (*Rissa tridactyla*).—Common.

GREAT BLACK-BACKED GULL (*Larus marinus*).—Scarce. Only one specimen on record, taken on March 9th, 1901.

RAZORBILL (*Alca torda*).—Obtained principally during the winter, sometimes in considerable numbers, the majority being immature specimens.

COMMON GUILLEMOT (*Uria troile*).—Found all round the coast, principally during stormy weather; during some winters these birds are exceptionally plentiful.

PUFFIN (*Fratercula arctica*).—Frequents the shore principally during the winter months, and breeds in considerable numbers on a small island off Alderney.

GREAT NORTHERN DIVER (*Colymbus glacialis*).—Obtained frequently during the winter months. A specimen was washed ashore in weak condition on March 16th this year near La Collette.

RED-NECKED GREBE (*Podiceps griseigena*).—There is only one record of the Red-necked Grebe having been taken in Jersey. This specimen is in Mr. Romeril's collection.

SLAVONIAN GREBE (*P. auritus*).—This species is frequently obtained in Jersey. Several specimens have been recorded during the past winter.

LITTLE GREBE (*P. flviatilis*).—Fairly common in suitable localities throughout the island.

GANNET (*Sula bassana*).—These birds visit the shores of Jersey chiefly during severe winters. Specimens have been taken at intervals on various parts of the coast.

SHAG OR GREEN CORMORANT (*Phalacrocorax graculus*).—Common all around the shore.

STORM-PETREL (*Procellaria pelagica*).—These birds, strange to say, are but seldom obtained around the shores of Jersey, although they nest in considerable numbers on a small island off Alderney. Two male specimens were forwarded to me from Alderney on May 14th this year.

NOTES AND QUERIES.

MAMMALIA.

White-beaked Dolphin (*Lagenorhynchus albirostris*) off Aberdeen. A specimen of this species, four feet long, was caught sixteen miles off Buchanness, July 23rd, 1904, and brought to Aberdeen Fish Market. On Aug. 18th following another was caught by trawl, from thirty to forty miles off Aberdeen. It measured, from beak straight to centre of tail, four feet, the breadth of tail being eleven inches. Nicolson, in his 'Manual,' p. 569, says: "Dolphins which are totally hairless when adult exhibit tufts of hair on the muzzle in the fœtal state." This one, however, still retained a portion of this fœtal appendage, there being some hairs on either side of the upper lip, each hair being three-quarters of an inch long, thus showing that the moustache continues for some time after birth; and, if we may judge from the condition of the teeth, none of which had cut the gums, although each was distinctly apparent, the conclusion must be arrived at that the creature was still solely dependent upon its mother for support. Altogether some fourteen or fifteen examples of this species have been recorded for the British and Irish seas. In the 'Proceedings' of the Royal Physical Society of Edinburgh, vol. x. p. 14, Sir W. Turner gives a good description of two that were caught off Stonehaven in 1888—one (a female) eight feet six inches long, and a young one, three feet eleven inches. He also gives a figure of the head of the young one, showing the position of the hairs on the upper lip, but he says nothing regarding the condition of the teeth.—Geo. SIM (Castle Street, Aberdeen).

AVES.

Fire-crested Wren (*Regulus ignicapillus*) in Lancashire: a Correction.—With reference to the note by Mr. J. Collins, Jun. (Zool. 1903, p. 455), of the capture of a specimen of the above-named species near Southport, may I be permitted to say that I made a critical examination of the specimen in question while it was temporarily placed in the Warrington Museum, and found it to be a brightly-marked male of the Common Goldcrest (*Regulus cristatus*, K. L. Koch).

I venture, therefore, to make the necessary correction. — R. NEWSTEAD (The Grosvenor Museum, Chester).

Unusual Nesting-site of the Nuthatch in Dorset.—A few miles from Beaminster, Dorset, a pair of Nuthatches (*Sitta casia*) attempted to breed during the season of 1904, in the open head of a rain-water pipe, which conveyed the water from the spouting under the eaves to the ground. As the nest would have inevitably been washed away by heavy rain, it was removed, in order that the birds might build elsewhere, and the head of the pipe covered with netting. During the process of removal it was found that eggs had already been laid. Although Nuthatches have been known to breed in nesting-boxes, I cannot recall an instance of their utilizing any part of a building as a nesting-site. The head of the pipe was some thirty feet from the ground.—FRANCIS C. R. JOURDAIN (Clifton Vicarage, Ashburne, Derbyshire).

Swallows in Jersey.—In the first week of last September, Swallows increased considerably around Fort Regent and the vicinity; indeed, at no time during the summer had they been so numerous, and apparently they were congregating prior to their departure from our shores. On Sept. 4th large numbers were observed on the telegraph-wires, evidently resting. Amongst a number that settled on a stretch of wire which runs along the outer ramparts, and within a few yards of my observation-post, I noticed one specimen of a light buff colour, the back being a shade darker, while the chestnut colour on the throat and forehead showed but faintly; probably a young bird of the year. Swifts have been exceptionally numerous here this year, but they have evidently left us for another season, as none have been seen since Sept. 1st.—H. MACKAY (Jersey).

Hawfinch (*Coccothraustes vulgaris*) in Aberdeenshire.—An immature male was shot near Peterhead on July 19th last. The condition of its plumage would lead to the belief that it had been bred in the district. This is the first I have known to occur in the county. It is now in Peterhead Museum.—GEORGE SIM (Castle Street, Aberdeen).

Cuckoos near Aberdeen.—Cuckoos (*Cuculus canorus*) have proved very interesting this season, the old birds having been fairly numerous. I have no exact date when they absolutely left, which was probably some time in July, though I think I saw an old one in the middle of August. The young birds were very numerous—in fact all round this locality—so that the numbers were again up to the highest observed here. The youngest ones showed themselves very conspicuously during

wet days from Aug. 9th onwards. They appeared to be more or less troubled for food, and the foster-birds were kept busy supplying them. In one case I had some idea that two were depending on one pair of foster-birds, but I scarcely think this could be so, though there were three all beside each other, one being younger, or at least not so well grown as the other two; and this youngster had more whitish yellow on the breast than usual. They were numerous when I left for the British Association at Cambridge on Aug. 16th, but were away by the 30th, when I returned home, though one at least had only gone a day or two before, as it remained for a considerable time among the surroundings of the garden and neighbourhood. The Twites were again in all cases foster-parents.—W. WILSON (Alford, Aberdeen).

The Prey of the Long-eared Owl.—As two contributors to the July issue of 'The Zoologist' (*ante*, pp. 259 and 265) give evidence of this species preying upon other birds, I think, in justice to *Asio otus*, I must give the result of my examination of a number of pellets cast up by this Owl, which is common in this district. I have boiled down a large number of pellets containing remains of forty-four Mice, thirty Voles, and twenty insectivores. The remains of two Finches, apparently a Sparrow and a Greenfinch, are the only evidence I have of birds being taken. I have also examined scores of these Owls' nests, but have never found anything but Mice and Voles in the larder.—W. GYNGELL (Scarborough).

Short-eared Owl breeding near Scarborough.—On June 30th last I had two young Short-eared Owls (*Asio accipitrinus*) with down still attached to their feathers, and about six weeks old, brought to me by a farmer, who said he shot them on the moor, a few miles from Scarborough. I think this is the first known occurrence of this species breeding in this locality. Have your readers heard of it breeding before in Yorkshire? I have one of them preserved in my possession at the present time. Last autumn was quite remarkable for the large numbers arriving in this locality, and one day last April I saw eleven of them flying about in the same place.—JOHN MORLEY (27, King Street, Scarborough).

Boldness of the Common Buzzard.—During the past spring two correspondents have described to me striking and unusual instances of aggression upon the part of this ordinarily inoffensive bird when annoyed by intruders in the vicinity of its nest. Under such circumstances, as already stated (*ante*, p. 100), the bird usually soars or circles overhead, showing its agitation by its more active flight and

angry mewing cry. In one instance, which I observed this spring, a pair of Buzzards left their nest, which contained three eggs, as I approached it, and flew silently away till out of sight. On the other hand, certain individuals, which I believe to be older birds which have been much molested at the nest, become extremely bold in defence of their eggs or young. Such a case is described by the Rev. C. Wolley Dod in the 'Field' of July 2nd, 1887. A similar experience befell a friend of the writer's when climbing upon the rocks of Tyrau Mawr, a part of the Cader Idris range. But probably no one has had such full and repeated experience of these encounters as Mr. O. R. Owen, of Rhayader, whom I have to thank for the following details, and for permission to make use of them. It was in May, 1902, while Mr. Owen was crossing a stretch of moorland through deep heather, that he was suddenly startled as a large bird swooped past his head, then rose and hovered above him. The Buzzard followed him for at least half an hour, and repeated this manoeuvre time after time. With rapid glance downwards, or from side to side, it appeared to watch for an opportunity of taking Mr. Owen unawares; then followed a quick pounce or downward swoop, causing a rush of air as it swept past just above his head. Mr. Owen defended himself with his stick, and narrowly missed striking the bird many times. Forgetting the Buzzard for a moment, he was looking for a Ring-Ouzel's nest, when it came at him with such a sudden dash that he lost his hat, slipped, and fell. The attack was so fierce and persistent as to be almost bewildering, ceasing only when Mr. Owen was some three-quarters of a mile from the place where the bird commenced its onset. What renders the occurrence the more curious is the fact of its taking place upon the open moor, some distance from any suitable nesting-site.

The past spring has brought to the same observer a repetition of similar incidents, the aggressor being in each case a particularly bold and fearless individual, which Mr. Owen is inclined to identify with his assailant of two years since. Be that as it may, the bird is always recognizable, having lost a primary from one of his wings. On May 3rd, while climbing in an awkward place amongst the rocks, the bird made such a determined attack that Mr. Owen, not being able to spare a hand to defend himself, remained clinging to a small ash-tree for over an hour. The Buzzard came at him each time with legs held straight out, talons fully spread, beak sometimes widely open. Only with oncoming twilight did it cease its attack, thus releasing my friend from an awkward position. A fortnight later Mr. Owen visited the locality again, and thus describes his experience:—"The Buzzard was

in great fighting form, and made innumerable rushes at me, sometimes at the rate of three a minute. I hit it upon the wing twice as it passed by my head. Its talons were outstretched, and its beak wide open. Dashing past me at a great pace, it turned round many times, and darted at me from the opposite direction. At times it soared above my head, and would descend perpendicularly right at me with great force. It chased me for quite a mile." It will be noted that while on the former occasion the bird returned after each charge to its starting-point, and thence made a fresh dash, following the downward slope of the hill-side, this time, being in a particularly warlike mood, it made a series of return charges from the opposite direction.

Three nests were observed which had been more or less repaired or relined by this bird and its mate, but all were empty, and neither upon this nor any subsequent occasion were eggs or young found. The hen bird, when present, shared the anxiety of her mate, but never joined him in attacking the climber. Upon June 6th the Buzzard again defended his domains with all his wonted energy and pluck. I hope next year to hear more of this grand bird, which has already a fighting record sufficient to redeem his race from the charge of sloth and cowardice.

Curiously enough, the past nesting season produced another incident of the same character, for details of which I am indebted to two naturalist friends, Mr. A. Gwynne-Vaughan and the Rev. D. E. Owen. The scene is some twenty miles distant from that of the occurrences above described. The nest, which contained three newly-hatched young, was in a small birch-tree upon the open hill-side, and was of such easy access that a child of ten could easily have reached it. Mr. Gwynne-Vaughan writes:—"While we were looking at the nest the hen Buzzard attacked us. The first time that she swooped she came within two feet of our heads. The second time that she came at us Mr. Owen shouted, and put up his stick to keep her off. It was a fine sight to see her go up and away about half a mile, then come down with wings half-closed at lightning speed until within fifteen or twenty feet of us, when, in order to avoid striking us, she would pull up so suddenly as to throw herself right on to her back." One can easily fill in the picture: the outstretched legs and extended talons, the wild fierce eye, the angry and defiant mien—it would be difficult to find a more striking scene within the range of British ornithology. Mr. Gwynne-Vaughan adds:—"I have visited scores of Buzzards' nests, but have never seen an attack like this before." It is interesting to note, that in this last case the attack was, according to both my informants, made by the hen bird, and from the fact of the nest containing

newly-hatched young, this appears to be probable. On the other hand, Mr. O. R. Owen is confident that in the case of the Rhayader pair the male bird was invariably the aggressor. This is a point which we may hope to clear up definitely next spring. Lest it should appear that the Buzzards were unduly harassed, I may say that none of the gentlemen named had any wish to molest the birds, nor would they have taken eggs had they found them.—J. H. SALTER (University College, Aberystwyth).

Strange Accident to a Sparrow-Hawk.—Many times during over thirty-three years of shooting experience it has been my lot to witness fatal accidents amongst the birds, from the domestic tragedy of the tame Jackdaw drowned in the water-butt to the swiftly twisting Woodcock dashing himself against the bole of a beech-tree. The most frequent cause of calamity is the telegraph-wire to the Larks. In most of the cases which have come under my notice concussion has been the cause of death. Last year I found a fine cock Blackbird which had hung itself in a noose of neatly twisted woodbine, and on Aug. 26th last, while shooting on the confines of the Bog of Allen, in Co. Kildare, Ireland, I came across the following casualty:—Across a rather blind gap in a hedge bordering a plantation of firs was a tightly stretched strand of barbed wire, and an old cock Sparrow-Hawk (*Accipiter nisus*), in dashing through this gap, had just touched one of the groups of barbs with what I may describe as the elbow of his wing; one of the sharp little spikes had pierced between the tough sinews and the bone, the impetus of flight had swung the bird over once round the wire, and there he hung till death overtook him. Having passed this gap late on the previous afternoon, and finding the bird on the following morning dead and stiff, seemed to prove that it died during the night, which was a singularly cold one for the time of year. The bird had lost a considerable amount of blood during his struggles, which had evidently been of a desperate character. In the 'Field' of Sept. 3rd or 10th I noticed an instance recorded of an accident happening to a Kestrel, so perhaps my observation may be of sufficient interest for record in 'The Zoologist.'—H. MARMADUKE LANGDALE (Compton House, Compton, Petersfield).

On Aug. 22nd, in Co. Kildare, Ireland, I captured a fine specimen of the *Convolvulus Hawk-moth* (female).—H. M. L.

Falco subbuteo and its Prey.—With regard to Mr. Corbin's account, in 'The Zoologist' (*ante*, p. 347), of the Hobby taking Bats, I may mention that on Sept. 17th, 1884, the gardener at Taverham Hall, Norwich, shot a Hobby, in the middle of the day, with a Bat in its

claws. The Bat was screaming, and so called the man's attention to the fact. I have the pair now in my collection.—JOS. F. GREEN (Bifrons, Canterbury).

Peewit Swimming.—In 'The Zoologist' (*ante*, p. 349), I was interested in Mr. G. T. Rope's account of a young Lapwing swimming. This bird can swim right well, and is not at all averse to taking to the water when occasion requires it to do so. In the course of my winter's wildfowl shooting, whenever I shoot Lapwings near the water, if the winged birds cannot escape by land, they always take to the water, and often give me a long chase, when they swim away in all directions, and if a strong tide is flowing it is surprising how quickly they get away. I have also seen them take to the water when hard pressed by a Peregrine, and in one instance, after dropping to the water, the poor bird was taken up by the Hawk—a most unusual proceeding, for generally the Falcon appears baffled by the bird taking to the water, and, after circling round a few times, goes off in search of other prey. I remember one day, when standing on the shore here watching a splendid flight of a Peregrine at a Lapwing, that, after several times avoiding the stoop of the Falcon, the poor Lapwing was so exhausted that it dropped on the water, and swam ashore to where I was standing, and so terrified that it allowed me to take it up as soon as it reached the land. The Hawk "waited on" and swooped down when I held the Lapwing up, and followed me close as long as I held the Lapwing, but on letting it loose in some cover the Hawk went off.—ROBERT WARREN (Moyview, Ballina).

Grey Phalarope at Aberdeen.—A specimen of this rarity (*Phalaropus fulicarius*) was caught in Aberdeen Harbour, Dec. 8th, 1903, and is now in my possession.—GEORGE SIM (Castle Street, Aberdeen).

Little Gull and Ortolan in Norfolk.—On Sept. 10th my brother, R. B. Arnold, shot an immature Little Gull (*Larus minutus*) near Wells (Norfolk). The wind was west. It was a very darkly barred specimen. On Sept. 18th I got a female Ortolan (*Emberiza hortulana*) in the same locality. The wind was south-west, and there was a great influx of Linnets at the time.—E. C. ARNOLD (Blackwater House, Eastbourne College).

Ornithological Notes from Richmond and Neighbourhood.—The Great Crested Grebes I mentioned in a former note (*ante*, p. 193) were still on the Penn Ponds, with one young one, on Sept. 11th. Though not exactly in this neighbourhood, it may not be out of place to mention that I counted over thirty of these birds on the reservoir at

Staines on Sept. 13th. I also saw on the Penn Ponds a fine male Pochard on Sept. 2nd. I have found the Tawny Owl (*Syrnium aluco*) very common in Richmond Park, and anyone wishing to hear their loud "hoot" has only to wait at the park-gates on Richmond Hill any fine evening, though they call more, I think, when the moon is full. I obtained two specimens of this species from Teddington this year, and they seem distributed throughout the Thames Valley. I saw lately a fine adult specimen of the Long-eared Owl (*Asio otus*), killed in the neighbourhood. The last Cuckoo seen this year was a very fine female, on Aug. 20th, which was killed by flying against the telegraph-wires.—GORDON DALGLIESH (29, Larkfield Road, Richmond, Surrey).

Notes from Hunstanton, Norfolk.—During a short stay at Hunstanton, early in September, we saw several lots of Scoters, of which three were shot on one day, and seven on another. Wooden decoys, which some of the boatmen make very cleverly, are used to attract the birds, and at a little distance they look very much like the real article. Perhaps at this season the most interesting features of the local bird-life are the great flocks of Common Gulls, which assemble on the Mussel-scalps at low tide, and the long lines of Oystercatchers, which pass along shore at high water when the autumn spring-tides are at the full. When these birds are washed off their feeding-grounds off Wolferton they seek a temporary resting-place near Brancaster, flying about a quarter of a mile out to sea, and perhaps about two hundred yards above the water, in wavy black streaks clearly defined against the evening sky, which at Hunstanton is often marvellously beautiful. On Sept. 10th I watched for some time two Sandwich Terns not far from the pier, and on the 16th my son shot two young Curlew-Sandpipers and a couple of Wigeon. Turnstones were numerous, and we found them almost as good eating as a Snipe.—JULIAN G. TUCK (Tostock Rectory, Bury St. Edmunds, Suffolk).

AMPHIBIA.

Edible Frog (*Rana esculenta*) in Surrey.—With reference to the note in 'The Zoologist' (*ante*, p. 352), I should like to put on record a few additional facts about the introduction of *Rana esculenta* into this county. About twenty years ago the late Lord Arthur Russell imported a number of these Frogs from Berlin, and turned them out in the neighbourhood of Shere. Most were put into a small pond, from which they made their way into Gomshall Marsh, where their

loud croaking excited some alarm and astonishment. In the year 1894 or 1895 we imported fifty more, again from Berlin, and these were put into a small artificially constructed pond in our garden here. Three or four of these still survive, and have spent ten years round the edge of the pond, plunging in when one approaches them. They are much more attached to the neighbourhood of water than our other species. They do not appear until May, long after the other Frogs have spawned and left the ponds. I have seen their spawn in our pond in June or July, and also tadpoles, which appeared to be those of *R. esculenta*; but I cannot say whether any reached maturity. If they did so, the young Frogs must have migrated. In the warm summer evenings these Frogs reward us with (to my mind) one of the most melodious concerts in nature. I did not know that they had extended their range to Ockham, which is at least six miles from Chilworth, with the North Downs between and a rather waterless country.—HAROLD RUSSELL (The Ridgeway, Shere, Guildford).

Natterjack Toad (*Bufo calamita*) in North Wales.—In the course of collecting materials for a fauna of North Wales, I have received from several correspondents records of the occurrence of the Natterjack in Denbighshire. Apparently it is confined to a belt of land stretching along the coast between the estuaries of the Conway and Clwyd Rivers, resorting in numbers to certain ponds during the breeding season. Whilst staying at Prestanyn in September, I obtained a specimen there among the sand-hills, and kept it alive for several days. I also found a dead one near the same spot. This shows that the species extends its range into Flintshire some miles east of the Clwyd. So far as is known, it occurs nowhere else in North Wales.—H. E. FORREST (Hillside, Bayston Hill, Shrewsbury).

Common Newt: does it occur in Carnarvon or Anglesey?—So far as I have been able to ascertain, all the small Newts in these counties belong to the Palmate species (*Molge palmata*), though the Great Crested (*M. cristata*) also occurs in Carnarvon. Any actual observations on this point will be very welcome.—H. E. FORREST (Hillside, Bayston Hill, Shrewsbury).

REPTILIA.

Some Habits of a Polynesian Lizard (*Lygosoma cyanurum*).—During my former voyage on the R.Y.S. 'Valhalla,' as naturalist to the Earl of Crawford (1902-3), we visited several island groups in the South Pacific. *Lygosoma cyanurum* was collected or observed in the following islands: Easter Island, Pitcairn, Tahiti, Tutuila and Upolu

(Samoa), and Viti Levu (Fiji). This species is exceedingly abundant in all the islands mentioned, and is most easily observed along the roadside, where it is usually to be seen climbing the flowering plants, and picking off the flies and small insects. In Tahiti I found an old and complete shell of a cocoanut on the ground, which, when handled, appeared to contain several Lizards. I stopped up the eye-holes, and took it on board for examination. I found it contained thirteen young Lizards, one hundred and thirty-six eggs, with the embryos in different stages of development, and also two hundred and ninety-four empty egg-shells. A few days later, in the same island, I found a hole in the ground containing several hundred newly-laid eggs. It would therefore appear that several females retire to the same spot to deposit their eggs.—M. J. NICOLL (10, Charles Road, St. Leonards-on-Sea).

PISCES.

Wolf-fish at Brighton.—While pier-fishing at Brighton on Oct. 5th, as the gale of that day was in "making," and a strong tide setting in, I caught a Wolf-fish (*Anarchichas lupus*), which may probably be not uncommon on this coast, but seems certainly unrecorded. Couch describes it as "among the rarest of fishes on the south of the British Islands," and gives Plymouth and Fowey in Cornwall as localities where specimens have been taken. Day refers to it as common along the Yorkshire coast; and it is recorded among the fishes of Yarmouth. It is not included in the list of fishes given in Mrs. Merrifield's 'Nat. Hist. of Brighton.'—W. L. DISTANT.

NOTICES OF NEW BOOKS.

Notes of an East Coast Naturalist. By ARTHUR H. PATTERSON.
Methuen & Co.

ARTHUR PATTERSON is the Thomas Edward of the Norfolk coast, or of that portion of it which adjoins the town so well known as Great Yarmouth. After a life of many struggles, with poverty for a neighbour, and long hours devoted to other pursuits than natural history for a living emolument, Patterson "comes out on top" as one of the recognized naturalists in a county where many lovers of nature abound. These remarks betray no confidence, but are prompted by the perusal of a biographical notice that accompanied the prospectus of his book, in noticing which the life of the author cannot be separated from the contents of the volume, and each is a valuable contribution to zoology. For it is of the greatest importance to the science to find that barriers of birth, circumstance, and culture can be successfully overcome, and that a man whose love of living creatures has been exercised at every spare moment in a strenuous existence, can make himself heard, and find means of giving his observations to the commonwealth of naturalists.

His contributions to zoology have been of two kinds: in technical local catalogues (several of which have appeared in these pages); and in bionomical observations, which form the contents of the volume under notice. In the first pursuit we are told that he has added over fifty species to the list of Great Yarmouth fishes, and twenty to the fish-fauna of East Anglia. With this remark we may conclude our personal appreciation, with a hope that the same energy displayed in observation may be supplemented by an equally sustained attack in the study of more abstruse principles in biology, when we shall expect to hear much—very much—more of this author.

Since 1891 Mr. Patterson has discarded the use of the gun, and substituted the employment of the field-glass, a very

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excellent reform, desired by many more of us who yet find the old Adam of a too abiding nature.

To sail about Breydon Broad in a small house-boat is to be really alone with nature, and when the sun goes down, and the Yarmouth lights glare up in the distance, there comes a time for many cogitations. On such excursions the notes have been made which have provided the narrative for these pages, and we do not propose to sample too many, which would be unfair, as the book is published at a moderate price.

It is interesting to read that in this locality the Meadow-Pipit is the prevalent foster-parent of the young Cuckoo; to hear again of the old professional gunner, who with cast-iron—or rather gun-metal—constitution could sleep out on the coldest nights, and sell his best prey for prices which sound ridiculous to wealthy collectors of to-day; while the beautifully coloured illustrations, to those who know Breydon, faithfully recall the scene, and exhibit birds *in situ*, which all have not been so fortunate to observe. The fish-notes are informative and sometimes surprising. “In November, 1897, a Pike of goodly size was taken in a Herring-net miles out at sea, off Yarmouth. It was *reported* to be ‘strong alive’ when captured; that it was netted I am satisfied, for it was taken to a taxidermist for preservation as a novelty.” We may hope that Mr. Patterson will give annual fish-reports, and do for these somewhat neglected creatures what Mr. Gurney does so excellently for birds.

Notes on the Natural History of the Bell Rock. By J. M. CAMPBELL; with an Introduction by JAMES MURDOCH. Edinburgh: David Douglas.

MR. CAMPBELL, Assistant Lightkeeper, has shown in this small volume that he is a naturalist at heart, and has mastered the art of seizing opportunities. For a solitary lighthouse-keeper to remain sane, or, if with a companion, to refrain from realistic quarrelling under such lonesome circumstances, would to most men seem no inconsiderable achievement. Here we find detailed the various animal appearances during the year. The spring brings forth the legions of White Whelk from their

winter quarters in sheltered nooks and crannies where they have resisted the winter's gales, and they spread over the rock like a devastating army, devouring all animal matter they come across; while the badderlock, or henware, grows in profusion where the wash of the sea is most constant, and it has been seen to increase a foot in length during a period of six weeks. And so from month to month there is always something fresh to chronicle concerning the sea and its living creatures. In October we read of occasional visits by feathered migrants, but "each year sees a decrease in the number of arrivals" at this light-house, probably owing to the increased number of lights on other parts of the coast. The birds usually arrive in a "fagged" condition, and are easily captured. "A Kestrel landed on our balcony-railing during fog, and, despite the explosion of our fog-signals twenty feet overhead, tucked his head under his wing and fell sound asleep." Sometimes we meet with strange conclusions, and these need not be too lightly dismissed. Thus Mr. Campbell writes:—"When fish show an unusual tenacity of life, that is, after being gutted and cleaned, exhibit strong muscular action for some time after, this phenomenon invariably precedes a change of some kind in the weather, usually more wind or heavier sea. This at least is my experience from several years' observations."

Frequent reference is made to one species of fish—the "Poddley"—which by that name alone may be unrecognized by some readers. We are always interested in this fish; it was the first sea-fish we captured in the days of our boyhood on the coast of Fife, where young fish are exceedingly plentiful; and when meeting Fifeshire men—sometimes irreverently called "Whistlers"—abroad, we have invariably tested their knowledge of local names by asking them if they knew what a "Poddley" was. As a rule, they did not know! Recognized by Couch as the "Podley," by Day as "Podlie" and "Podling," it is the well-known *Gadus virens*, or Coalfish.

When an "Assistant Lightkeeper" can observe and record his observations, as detailed in this small volume, we may well regret the immense loss of unrecorded natural history observation that yearly dies with fishermen, marshmen, birdcatchers, poachers, gamekeepers, and other men of no "light or leading."

Natural History Essays. By GRAHAM RENSHAW, M.B., F.Z.S.
Sherratt & Hughes.

MOST readers of 'The Zoologist' are familiar with the name of Dr. Renshaw, who has contributed several papers on rare mammals and birds to its pages. These and others are now included in an amply illustrated volume entitled 'Natural History Essays,' which altogether relate to African mammals, numbering sixteen in all. We apply the word African, and not the term Ethiopian, to these animals, as some of them are found in the northern part of the continent which is included in the Palæ-arctic region.

A strong feature in these essays exists in the full information as regards the number of specimens—and their present museum location, of several very scarce, and at least two extinct species; while Mr. Renshaw has compiled very much information regarding their habits from the pages of old African travellers. These obituary notices of the Quagga and the Blaauwbok are now very sad and prophetic reading to those who have recently visited the plains of Southern Africa, and have noticed the immense diminution of the once enormous mammalian fauna. A few years ago an old Africander visited Pretoria, and pointed out a spot in the centre of the town where he had once killed a Lioness; whilst in the environs of that city a Boer farmer has told us how Lions used to visit his lonely farm, and pointed to the spots they used to frequent. All that is altered; the wild game is only found where the shaft has not been sunk; the Antelopes have almost disappeared, for the Boers found a market for their skins; Lions have restricted their range; and the Rand millionaire is now the lord of an auriferous land.

To those who wish the story of some of these animals well told, we commend this small volume.

Superstitions about Animals. By FRANK GIBSON. The Walter Scott Publishing Co., Ltd.

THE subject-matter of this book is open to a different conception and treatment to that pursued by Mr. Gibson. It might have been entitled "Animal Folk-lore," and its origins searched for in the cults of primitive folk. The author has, however,

chosen to treat these "survivals" as superstitions, and to trace their appearance and quotations in the lines of poets and other distinguished writers—mostly British. He has thus produced a most interesting anthology, which bears the impress of a familiar acquaintance with most of our well-known poets and biblical writers. He has carefully compiled most of those weird and curious notions which have principally become attached to birds, and has traced them throughout much literature, but he has not dealt with their origins, which the growing study of folk-lore can alone reveal. What we call superstitions are most frequently only survivals of events and ideas from a dim past, which have come down to us in the stage of myth, and already much has been traced in animal folk-lore which has evidently not yet come under the purview of Mr. Gibson, who approaches the problem from another standpoint. He asks:—"How came legends and omens and monstrosities into existence? Did they arise from men's sinfulness and fear, or were they the outcome of fertile imaginations desirous of adding to the wonders of Creation?" There is in this subject a distinct opportunity for a great book, which might prove a companion volume to the well-known 'Wanderings of Plants and Animals from their First Home,' by Hehn and Stallybrass. Mr. Gibson has produced an interesting volume, but he should not refer to Figuier as "the celebrated naturalist."

A Book of the Snipe. By "SCOLOPAX." Blackwood & Sons.

A PERUSAL of this little book will prove to any reader that it is possible to find the sportsman and naturalist combined in one individual. Snipe-shooting to the writer of this notice is now only a memory, and was confined to rice and old cane fields in the Malay Peninsula, where the birds could in season be found abundantly, and under a tropical sun; "Scolopax" deals with the bird as found in these islands, often in bog-lands, under a wintry sky, and frequently requiring much finding. Although to most of our readers the Snipe and not the gun will be the chosen subject-matter, the little volume should be read from end to end, for the author is both a sportsman among field naturalists, and a field naturalist among sportsmen, and we come across hints and

observations where least expected. Thus we know that most animals seek to escape danger by concealment, and endeavour to reach an environment which provides some amount of assimilative coloration. According to "Scolopax," this may be the last living effort of the Snipe. "I think it is pretty certain that a Snipe not killed outright, yet *in extremis*, always looks out for a secure hiding-place in which to drop, even though it may die before reaching the ground, a fact that may account for the wonderful concealment of many dead birds. I can only say that I have witnessed birds falling with a bump, perfectly dead, into the only patch of cover available for a long distance, too often for the circumstance to be merely the result of chance."

The author remarks that he is positive, without being able to prove it, that he saw a Snipe fly across the crowded road which leads from Hammersmith Bridge to Barnes Common in January of this year. We have had recent records of the bird nesting in Romney Marsh (Zool. 1897, p. 271), and on Epsom Common (Zool. 1899, p. 225), and it has been reported as an uncommon winter visitor to the metropolis itself; but, as "Scolopax" remarks, "It is not unlikely that the glare of a city seen from the heights above by the travelling birds may actually attract them to a nearer inspection."

EDITORIAL GLEANINGS.

THE Rev. J. Cartmel Robinson has recently contributed to the 'Daily Chronicle' on the question of "Do Animals think?" Among other remarks we cull the following:—

"It has often astonished me that comparative psychology has not been studied to greater advantage, for no one who really loves animals and observes them attentively can fail to see how much we have in common. That the mental process in animals and men is identical, I am not prepared to say, but if there be a difference it seems to be one of degree rather than of kind.

"If the theory of Descartes be true, that animals are merely automata, then all I can say is that I have been imposed on all the days of my life by appearances. Tiglath Pileser, the Goat, Ragnar, the Raven, Paddy, the Dog, Billy, the Tortoise, Uncle, the Toad, and a hundred others have only been so many cunning simulations of thinking beings. You shade of Æsop and Romanes; you Michelet and Seton-Thompson, and Uncle Remus, you are all wrong; animals only appear to think. Man, after all, has the exclusive monopoly!"

He gives an interesting account of a Goose he had under observation:—

"His home was on a farm in 'Jefferies land'—that Jefferies who knew so much about animals, and yet did not seem to love them as some men have done. He was then about four weeks old—a solitary gosling, awkward in manner, and with the dull plumage of a young bird. By solitary I mean that he had no companions among his own kind. But he had escaped the spirit of isolation by adopting a large brood of ducklings even younger than himself. For them he seemed to live, and I verily believe, by the tremendous combats in which I saw him engaged on their behalf, that for them he would willingly have died.

"In the evening when they were fed he marched the whole brood up to the dish, and perambulated the outside of the circle, fighting all intruders, until the meal was finished. Cocks and hens, Ducks and Geese, even the majestical Peacock, respected his office. If one of them so much as dared to draw near he was instantly attacked, and

with such fury, by the gosling, that he fled precipitately. During all this time he got nothing for himself, and frequently squatted on the ground from sheer exhaustion. When they were all surfeited he led them off like an earl marshal to the brook for a drink ; and then, with the setting of the sun, dutifully brought them back to their pen, where they were safely housed from marauding Foxes.

“ People apply such epithets as ‘divine charity’ and ‘enlightened self-interest’ to the same ethical action. But when we differentiate, and call that reason in man which is only instinct in a Dog, I would ask seriously what is meant. Is it a qualitative or a quantitative difference? For instance, what does Jefferies mean when he says, ‘There is nothing human in any living animal’? Such words are unintelligible to me. Depend on it, the more we realize the unity of creation, and especially the correlation of all living things, the better it will be for the world.”

